

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VALLET 01208 200715Z

13  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 /046 W  
----- 003779

R 191540Z OCT 76  
FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7037  
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
USMISSION USNATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1208

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, MT  
SUBJ: ARCHBISHOP GONZI TO RETIRE

1. DURING MY FAREWELL CALL THIS MORNING ON SIR MICHAEL GONZI, THE CATHOLIC ARCHBISHOP OF MALTA (AND AT 92 DEAF AS A POST AND THE OLDEST SERVING BISHOP IN THE CHURCH), HE CONFIRMED THAT HE HAS FINALLY ASKED THE VATICAN "TO BE RELIEVED" OF HIS DUTIES. HIS HOPE, HOWEVER, IS TO "RETAIN" THE TITLE OF ARCHBISHOP OF MALTA AND TO CONTINUE TO RESIDE IN AN APARTMENT IN THE ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE HERE -- WHILE PROVIDING ADVICE AND COUNSEL TO THE "TITULAR BISHOP" NAMED TO HANDLE THE DAY-TO-DAY AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH.

2. COMMENT: THE ARCHBISHOP'S PLAN TO HANG ON --HOWEVER TENUOUSLY--WILL NOT BE WELCOMED AND APPEARS IMPROBABLE OF SUCCESS. INDEED, ATTORNEY GENERAL MIZZI HAS TOLD ME FLATLY THAT GONZI IS STEPPING DOWN THIS MONTH-- WITHOUT QUALIFICATION--AND THAT A "BATTLE ROYAL" IS UNDERWAY FOR THE SUCCESSION. ONE LIKELY CANDIDATE IS THE PRESENT AUXILIARY BISHOP TO THE ARCHBISHOP, MONSIGNOR JOSEPH MERDIECA. SMITH

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NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** RELIGIOUS LEADERS, PERSONNEL RESIGNATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 19 OCT 1976  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1976VALLET01208  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
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**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D760393-0307  
**From:** VALLETTA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1976/newtext/t19761035/aaaabeej.tel  
**Line Count:** 51  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** BoyleJA  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 07 APR 2004  
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**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** ARCHBISHOP GONZI TO RETIRE  
**TAGS:** PINT, PGOV, MT, (GONZI, MICHAEL)  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006